SYSPRO Software Gives Ettore Products 99.6% Inventory Accuracy

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■ The Company

In 1936, Ettore Products Company, headquartered in Alameda, Calif., patented the first single-blade squeegee. A careful (and secret!) blend of ingredients in the Ettore rubber gave the squeegee an unprecedented ability to clean glass perfectly. Originally nicknamed the "New Deal," the Ettore Master squeegee has remained virtually unchanged since its inception more than 70 years ago.

Today, Ettore is the undisputed market leader in the production of squeegees and associated products, such as cleaners, scrubbers and extension poles. The company owns 80% of the consumer market and 75% of the professional window-cleaning market.

"We made huge leaps with collecting costs off the production floor and the vision of the time/cost it was taking to produce product. [SYSPRO] gave us goals to improve, and we did."
— MS Duncan
Systems Manager, Ettore

Ettore takes their role as an experienced industry leader seriously. Going another step beyond manufacturing and distributing their first-class window cleaning products, they also host brochures as well as a "Do It Best" video on their website, offering free professional cleaning and safety tips to professionals. Ettore products are sold in hardware, home improvement and grocery stores all across North America.

■ The Challenge

By 1997, Ettore had long ago carved out their leading position in the industry and were only continuing to grow. Unfortunately, their software wasn't. According to then Systems Manager, MS Duncan, Ettore had outgrown two computer software systems, while the incumbent solution was replete with failures. It provided little in the way of detailed costing figures, such as landed cost tracking.

The company had also struggled for several years to get control of inventory. Existing practices were tiresome and inefficient. "Every time Purchasing or the Production Scheduler needed to purchase and schedule, they had to go out in the warehouse and count what was on hand," says Duncan.

The most serious problem, however, was that the system was infected with a computer virus that impeded the retrieval of accurate inventory figures. This was compromising Ettore's ability to plan for future purchases. "All in all, we needed to find a new system that would give us the information we needed to grow and one that would grow with us," says Duncan.

■ AT A GLANCE ■

COMPANY

Ettore Products Company

INDUSTRY

Hardware Manufacturing

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

80

THE CHALLENGE

- Failing incumbent system
- Cumbersome import/export requirements
- Error-prone reporting processes
- 25+ warehouses
- Lack of inventory control
- Limited access to history
- Deficient visibility into costing figures
- Absence of scalability
- Susceptibility to viruses

SOLUTION & SERVICES

- Fully integrated ERP
- Accurate forecasting abilities
- Factory scheduling module
- SYSPRO Office Integration
- Advanced, role-based interfaces
- Four-phased rollout

THE BENEFITS

- 99.6% inventory accuracy!
- Enterprise-wide inventory control
- Increased visibility into history
- Easy Access to real-time data
- Cost tracking abilities
- Reduced overall costs
- Flexibility in production line
- Easily estimated profits

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■ The Solution

Duncan reviewed the SYSPRO system after returning from vacation and found that, "the software would indeed meet our requirements." After careful consideration of the alternatives, Ettore installed SYSPRO ERP.

Having seen the previous systems fail repeatedly, Duncan was experienced in what steps to take going forward. She recalls, "I had been with the company for about twelve years at the time we implemented SYSPRO, so I had learned a lot about how to template the new system in order to pull the needed reports in the required formats. I also knew not to download any information from the old system because of the virus."

Duncan played a big part in implementing the new system. "I decided to personally build SYSPRO from scratch," she says. "I learned so much about the system, how to put it to use, its directives for processing information and numerous other pluses. It was then that I realized that we had a powerful tool we could grow with."

Most recently, Ettore upgraded to SYSPRO 6.0, Service Pack 1. Robin Goldman, Ettore Chief Information Officer, notes that the SYSPRO Forecasting module, which replaced a manual (and error-prone) Excel system, was a major reason why Ettore decided to install SP1. Ettore makes more than 500 products to stock so accurate forecasting is essential to reduce inventory costs and speed inventory turnover. "Our COO is very happy with the reports being generated by the Forecasting module," Goldman says. "Ultimately, it will drive the product through MRP."

The SP1 release contains new functionality as well as further enhancements to the user interface. The release also contains new modules, including a Factory Scheduling module and the SYSPRO Office Integration module that enables users secure access to SYSPRO data using Microsoft Office products, such as Word and Excel. The SP1 also encompasses an advanced user interface that includes docking panes and role-based layout design that enable users to make effective use of the application workspace and a full-featured calendar.

■ The Result

Goldman lauds the user interface enhancements available in SP1. "I can now customize the interface to add new levels of efficiency," she says, pointing to the ability to write a VB program to update all the lines on a sales order. In addition, she says, "we were able to retain all our personal settings, including favorites, task lists and printers."

As a fully integrated module, SYSPRO eliminates the need to export/import to Excel. Ettore no longer has to rely on a manual system or one individual. Integrated access to stock code history, as well as the delivery of figures in real time enables superior management decision-making. SYSPRO Forecasting features and graphical elements provide greater insight into data and different forecasting methods allow for greater flexibility.

Duncan appreciates the ease-of-use inherent in the SYSPRO solution. "The Bill of Materials system allowed us to vary our processes to make adjustments when something unforeseen happened on the production line," she says. "We were able to figure in the cost of cottage labor. We were able to absorb landed costs. Profits were easy to estimate through simple queries on inventory items. Customer sales history was easy to see. If I went through the whole system and compared where we had come from and where SYSPRO led us over the years, I'd have to go on and on. SYSPRO is wonderful."

According to Duncan, it was the SYSPRO inventory control that made the largest positive impact on Ettore operations. "When we brought up the system, we did it in four phases: Sales, Inventory, Manufacturing and Accounting. The final phase – Inventory – was the best!" After about a year on the system, Ettore ended up with a consistent 99.6% inventory accuracy, across all of their three major warehouses (Amsterdam, China and Tennessee) and at least 25 cottage warehouses. "We made huge leaps with collecting costs off the production floor and the vision of the time/cost it was taking to produce product. It gave us goals to improve, and we did."

"I loved the SYSPRO system," summarizes Duncan. "It was like a teacher to me, and I loved being its student!"